

# The Poet Laureate of Erie County 2014 Contest Information Packet

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The application period is April 28, 2014, through June 30, 2014.  
Applications should be mailed or delivered to:

Poet Laureate Search  
c/o Erie County Council Office  
Erie County Courthouse  
140 West Sixth Street, Room 114  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16501

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for considering to represent Erie County as the public face of poetry for the coming year. Our initiative is renowned for its depth and level of support. No other county or municipality in the country puts more resources into poetry as does Erie County, Pennsylvania.

The eventual Laureate will take charge of a \$9,500.00 grant. Three-thousand dollars of this goes to the poet as stipend or award. The remaining \$6,500.00 is the laureate's budget, to carry out a project which will bring poetry to the people of Erie County. The ratio of the award adequately reflects the goals of the Erie County Poet Laureate Initiative. Service to the public is the lion's share of the project.

This contest is open to all residents of Erie Co. Pennsylvania, with one caveat. Because the representative of poetry for Erie County should be a professionally experienced poet, each applicant must have had his or her poetry previously published in some refereed format. This means that an established press, journal, or recording company must have accepted your poetry for publication, including print formats such as journals, chapbooks, collections, or digital formats such as video or audio file. Please use the format within this application packet to list your publications.

Beyond these basic qualifications, the competition to become Poet Laureate of Erie County has three elements: submitted poems, the project proposal and budget, and a live presentation of your work before the panel of judges and the citizens of the county.

From your poetry, (up to 12 pages of your original work) choose those which would be appropriate for general audiences, as you must read them in front of the citizens of the county, including children. Because these poems will be judged both on paper and, if you are a finalist, on the stage, you should choose poems which both read well and are pleasing to the ear. Beyond these general considerations, your choices are not limited to any genre of poetry or type of subject.

Your submitted work should be typed and professional in appearance. Your project proposal may follow the template provided. In your project proposal, you must include estimates of your expenses from actual vendors you would use, and you must prefer Erie County vendors whenever possible.

The five or so poets with the best scores in the written poems and project proposal categories will be invited to a venue to present their poems out loud before the judges and the county. Your presentation will be an opportunity to show the judges how you will represent the county as our official poet. You must present poems from those you submitted in the first place, so choose them wisely. The judges' rubric is available to you.

Whoever the eventual Laureate is, the important part of this initiative, as expressed in the proportion of our resources, is the public appreciation of poetry itself. The Laureate is a temporary title which reflects the taste of this year's judges and the mix of contestants, but the artistic spirit of Erie County endures. Every finalists' reading has been an amazing show in its own right, demonstrating the wealth and variety of strong poetry in our county. We are thrilled you are taking part in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

The Erie County Poet Laureate Initiative Committee

## **The Erie County Poet Laureate Initiative** **Bylaws 2014-2015**

### **The Poet Laureate Initiative**

The Poet Laureate Initiative in Erie County is a means by which the community will be exposed to exceptional poetry. The Initiative consists of the Erie County Poetry Committee, the Poet Laureate Judges, the Poet Laureate position, and the yearly community outreach project. The Erie County Poet Laureate is an emissary for poetry who will promote an awareness of poetry and inspire an appreciation of the art form in our community.

### **1) The Committee**

The Committee will consist of six to ten persons, including at least one member of the faculty of each of the County's higher education institutions, at least one representative from a county school district, and an elected county official appointed by the Chairman of Council. Members from the community at large who share a vital interest in poetry will fill the remaining seats. Each January the Committee shall reorganize and select a Chair Person, Secretary, and Treasurer from their membership.

Erie County Poetry Committee appointments will serve a term of five years, renewable once. The respective universities will recommend their representatives or replacements to the Committee.

The Erie County Poetry Committee will work with the Laureate to provide oversight and aid while he/she executes his/her yearly responsibilities.

The Erie County Poetry Committee will also maintain a web presence that will include the documents covering all aspects of the Erie County Poet Laureate Initiative, an archive of the works produced by the Erie County Poet Laureates (their poetry and, where possible, the results of their Projects), and related information to help keep poetry a vital art in the County. An annual budget of \$500 (hereafter, operating funds) will be provided from the Erie County Poet Laureate Initiative funds to maintain the web presence and help provide promotional assistance to the Erie County Poet Laureate. The operating funds will be the responsibility of the Treasurer of the Committee.

### **2) The Judges**

The Erie County Poetry Committee will select a panel of five Judges, who will then review all applications for the Laureate and make a final selection. Three of the Judges members will be chosen from the Erie County Poetry Committee by a majority vote of the Committee. The two other Judges volunteer from the community at large and will be approved by the Committee.

### **3) The Poet Laureate**

The Laureate shall be a resident of Erie County, Pennsylvania, whose works have appeared in literary journals, books, anthologies, or other media.

The Laureate shall be someone who regularly contributes to the region's poetry community and should be comfortable with public presentation and interaction.

The Laureate will contribute to the history of poetry in Erie County and foster the appreciation of verse across the community.

The Laureate will serve a one-year appointment from September 1 to August 31, renewable no more than twice. The Laureate will read poetry at selected civic occasions, celebrations, and communal gatherings; encourage others to explore their creative writing abilities; and inspire personal expression through poetry.

The Laureate may collaborate with other artistic groups and will encourage writing by people of all ages and backgrounds.

The Laureate is required to give a minimum of one public reading of his/her own original work during this tenure as well as develop and implement a community outreach project.

The Laureate will receive a \$3,000 honorarium and a \$6,500 approved budget for his/her community poetry outreach project.

The Laureate will cooperate with the Erie County Poetry Committee to fulfill the obligations of the position. He/she will provide a mid-term progress report to the Committee by March 1 and a final report by August 31. The Committee will then submit the report to County Council for review.

Prospective poets who hope to be selected as Erie County's Poet Laureate should submit an application to the panel of judges and must meet the following conditions:

- Provide up to 12 pages of original poetry
- Provide evidence of published poems and other accomplishments in the field.
- Propose a community outreach project that reflects the mission and goals of the Poet Laureate, including an itemized projection for a \$6,500 budget
- Present poems aloud to the public and the judges at a venue to be determined.

#### **4) The Poet's Project**

The Poet Laureate will create and implement a community outreach project that makes poetry more available and accessible to the citizenry of Erie County. The project should be structured to create a natural connection to community groups such as school children, seniors, and/or any other groups who appreciate the arts and the cultivation of beauty, both written and spoken.

- The project will be defined by a detailed narrative and a proposed budget.
- The project and the budget must be approved by the Erie County Poetry Committee.
- The project must be designed to be completed within a one-year time period.
- The project's vendors will be selected from Erie County whenever possible.
- The Erie County Accounting Department will prepare the checks for the project and for the Laureate's honorarium.
- The Erie County Poet Laureate will provide the Erie County Poetry Committee with a final report which summarizes the events and projects completed, and which includes a detailed breakdown of how Erie County Poet Laureate funds were spent.

Erie County Poet Laureate Initiative  
c/o Erie County Council Office  
Erie County Courthouse  
140 West Sixth Street, Room 114  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16501

## LAUREATE APPLICATION/JUDGING PROCESS

- A complete application includes a Résumé, poetry, and a project proposal including a budget; these should be mailed or delivered to the address in the packet.
- After the application deadline passes, a small committee will vet the submissions and be sure that applications are complete. The Résumé is evaluated at this stage.
- Only those meeting the requirements will go onto the Clerk for coding.
- Clerk will remove the names, code the entries, and make copies of poetry and projects from each vetted applicant. (Applicants can make this process easier by formatting documents so that names are easy to remove.)
- Each judge will get folders of the poems and of the projects. Judges will also receive the rubric and the separate scoring sheets necessary for each phase of the competition.
- Judges are given a few weeks to score the poems and project proposals. The poems and the projects are judged blindly and independently.
- Judges return scored poems and projects to Council Office.
- The Clerk tallies scores and informs the committee of the identities of the five finalists. If a conflict of interest is indicated, an alternate judge is found for the final step in the competition.
- A presentation date is set in late August (usually a Monday evening). The finalists will present their poems to the judges and an open audience.
- Judges score presentation of finalists and give tallies to clerk for totaling.
- Committee and Judges are informed of winner; committee notifies the new Laureate.

**ERIE COUNTY POET LAUREATE APPLICANT**

**RUBRIC - WRITTEN POEMS 2014**

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**FORM AND FORMAL ELEMENTS:**

**4**

The form of the poem is integral to its meaning. The poem's craft demonstrates care and attention. If the form is traditional, the poem demonstrates knowledge of the form. If the form is open, lines and movement interact in stirring ways with meaning. The poem demonstrates skill in execution at every point.

**3**

The form of the poem is appropriate to the subject. If the form is traditional, the form is followed closely though perhaps a stiff in places. If the form is open, the lines evidence care if not mastery.

**2**

The form of the poem should be more skillfully handled. The poem operates through predictable wording or rhyming or clichés. If the form is traditional, the poem relies on contortions of language to achieve meter or other effects. If the form is open, there is little evidence that the shape of the poem is more than idiosyncratic choices.

**1**

The form of the poem is weak, and does not interact with other levels of meaning. If the form is traditional, it is carried out badly. If the form is open, the poem seems haphazard and random.

**0**

The poem does not meet the requirements of the Committee or cannot be judged for a reason unanimously agreed to by the judges. There is no further scoring.

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**IMPACT:**

**4**

The poem captivates and inspires the reader. It has something vital to say about the human condition and requires thought beyond the last word of the poem.

**3**

The poem attracts the reader's attention. Some images or turns of phrase remain with the reader.

**2**

The poem is adequate.

**1**

The poem lacks inspiration, is bland, predictable, banal, and forgettable.

**0**

The poem fails to inspire or is too confusing in its content to be judged.

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**POETIC LANGUAGE and ELEMENTS:**

4

The language is vibrant, descriptive, and exact. Sensory details and figurative language create vivid images that contribute significantly to the meaning of the poem. Sound devices (such as rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia) are used effectively and contribute to the meaning of the poem.

3

Sensory details, figurative language, and sound devices (such as rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia) contribute to the meaning of the poem. Most word choices are precise.

2

Sensory details, figurative language, and sound devices (such as rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia) are overused, underused, or inappropriate to the topic. When used, they fail to add to the meaning of the poem. Word choices may be vague, repetitive, or imprecise.

1

There is confusing or inappropriate use of sensory details, figurative language, and/or sound devices (such as rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia). Words are misused or unclear.

0

There is no use of sensory details, figurative language, or sound devices.

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**GRAMMAR, USAGE, MECHANICS, and SPELLING:**

4

Word choice serves the poem; it is fresh and unexpected but fitting. Grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling are either standard, or they serve a purpose such as to create voice (as with dialect) or to introduce productive ambiguity.

3

Word choice is precise. There are some errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, and/or spelling, but none of these are vital to the poem overall and easily understood as errata.

2

Word choice is occasionally vague or imprecise. Some errors in mechanics, grammar, usage, and spelling make the poem difficult to understand at times.

1

Word choices tend to be vague, repetitive, or imprecise. Errors in mechanics, grammar, usage, and spelling make the poem difficult to understand.

0

The poem consistently defeats itself because of errors in grammar, mechanics, usage, and spelling. For example, the poem may weaken its images or become unintentionally funny.

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**ERIE COUNTY POET LAUREATE APPLICANT**

**SCORING SHEET - WRITTEN POEMS**

**APPLICANT CODE # \_\_\_\_\_**

	<b>Excellent (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0)</b>
Form and Formal Elements.					
Impact					
Poetic language and elements					
Grammar, usage, mechanics, spelling					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

**TOTAL POINTS:**    **WRITING \_\_\_\_\_/16**

**COMMENTS:**

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**DATE SCORED:**    \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORED BY:**    \_\_\_\_\_

**ERIE COUNTY POET LAUREATE APPLICANT**

**SCORING SHEET - PRESENTED POEMS**

**APPLICANT CODE # \_\_\_\_\_**

<b><i>PRESENTATION</i></b>	<b>Excellent (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0)</b>
Effectively delivers poem for the audience, including voice projection and enunciation.					
<b><i>INTERPRETATION</i></b>	<b>Excellent (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0)</b>
Body movement, facial expressions, and gestures are consistent with and enhance the ideas and mood of the poem					
<b><i>OVERALL IMPRESSION</i></b>	<b>Excellent (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0)</b>
Impression of poet's presentation					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

**TOTAL POINTS:    PRESENTATION \_\_\_\_/12**

**COMMENTS:**

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**DATE SCORED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ERIE COUNTY POET LAUREATE APPLICANT**

**SCORING SHEET - POET LAUREATE PROJECT**

**APPLICANT CODE # \_\_\_\_\_**

<b><i>ORIGINALITY</i></b>	<b>Excellent (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0)</b>
Project addresses basic community needs, interests, and venues in an appealing and imaginative way (note grammar, spelling, mechanics, etc.)					
<b><i>FEASIBILITY</i></b>	<b>Excellent (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0)</b>
Project is predictably "doable" in terms of poet's time and other commitments					
<b><i>STEWARDSHIP</i></b>	<b>Excellent (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0)</b>
Project reasonably falls within the parameters of allocated funds					
<b><i>COMMUNITY IMPACT</i></b>	<b>Excellent (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0)</b>
Project covers an appropriate range of community venues (i.e., schools, community centers, arts events, etc.)					

**TOTAL POINTS:**    **PROJECT \_\_\_\_/16**

**COMMENTS:**

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**DATE SCORED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ERIE COUNTY POET LAUREATE APPLICANT**

**FINAL SCORING SHEET**

**APPLICANT CODE # \_\_\_\_\_**

**WRITTEN SCORE - \_\_\_\_\_/16**

**PRESENTATION SCORE - \_\_\_\_\_/12**

**PROJECT SCORE - \_\_\_\_\_/16**

**TOTAL SCORE - \_\_\_\_\_/44**

**SCORED BY: \_\_\_\_\_**

**NOTE: THIS SHEET WILL BE FILLED IN AND TALLIED BY DOUG SMITH,  
COUNTY CLERK. JURORS WILL NOT FILL IN THIS SHEET.**

# Poet Name

## Sample Résumé

### Education

(an advanced degree is not required to be the Poet Laureate of Erie Co.)

Diploma/Degree 1	Granting Body	Date
Diploma/Degree 2	Granting Body	Date

### Experience

Poet-Laureate-Applicable Experience 1	Date-Date
Poet-Laureate-Applicable Experience 2	Date-Date
Poet-Laureate-Applicable Experience 3	Date-Date

### Publications

(examples follow for different types of poetry publications)

#### Books or Chapbooks

*Book or Chapbook Title*. City: Publisher, Year.

#### Poems in Anthologies

“Poem Title.” *Anthology Title*. Ed. Editor’s Name. City: Publisher, Year.

#### Poems in Print Periodicals

“Poem Title.” *Journal Title*. Publication Date.

#### Poems in Online Periodicals

“Poem Title.” *Online Periodical Title*. Publication Date. [www.completeurl.com/xyz.html](http://www.completeurl.com/xyz.html)

#### Poems in Other Media

“Poem Title.” *Album or Recording* (if applicable). Producer, Publisher (if applicable), Year.  
Type of media (video, audio).

### Recent Readings/Presentations/Workshops

Event, Venue 1	Date
Event, Venue 2	Date
Event, Venue 3	Date

### Selected Honors & Awards

Award 1, Awarding Body	Date
Award 2, Awarding Body	Date

### Affiliations/Memberships

Membership 1	Date-Date
Membership 2	Date-Date

## Sample Project Proposal from 2009 winning entry

As Poet Laureate, I will “contribute to the history of poetry in Erie County and foster the appreciation of verse across the community” through these initiatives:

- **Erie County Book Project**

I plan to publish a book of poems written by Erie County residents.

This family-friendly book project will be announced in early September. Residents of Erie County will be invited to submit poems that reflect their experiences and explore the ways language allows them to give order and meaning to those experiences. Artists will also be invited to submit sketches, paintings, photographs, and graphic art. The deadline for submissions will be January 8, 2010.

Throughout the fall, I will facilitate workshops for interested local poets to discuss the book and their ideas for poems. We will examine poems by a variety of poets, including Dickinson, Whitman, William Carlos Williams, Plath, Jane Kenyon, Donald Hall, and others. These free workshops will be held at Gannon University.

The book will be printed by the Gannon University Press and perfect-bound by Twenty-First Century Press in Buffalo. It will be unveiled at a reception in April, National Poetry Month, at a location to be determined. Writers will read their published poems, and both writers and artists will discuss their work and answer questions about it. Publishing the book with Gannon’s full color press will assure quality and a competitive cost. Chris Matheis, press director, has agreed to publish the book and has provided a budget.

Each artist and writer whose work appears in the book will receive a free copy. Other copies will be sold for \$5.00; the proceeds from these books will be donated to the Hooked On Books! program at the Neighborhood Art House.

- **College Poetry Slam**

Also in April 2010, I will work with my students to host a College Poetry Slam at Gannon. Student poets from Penn State Erie, Mercyhurst College, Edinboro University, and the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine will be invited to read their poems and join in a reception following the reading. Students will also be encouraged to share and distribute their schools’ literary magazines at this event.

- **Erie County High School Poetry Contest and Gannon University’s Awards Night**

I will coordinate Gannon’s annual high school and college poetry contests and will plan the Awards Night celebration to encompass Erie County’s poetry initiative. I will attempt to solicit more involvement from Erie County high school teachers and students for the contest. In addition to the national call for submissions, the contest will have **a category exclusively for Erie County high school students**. I will ask members of the Erie County Poetry Committee to judge the poems in this category.

Because this will be the inaugural year for Erie County's Poet Laureate Initiative, I will attempt to make the Awards Night extra special by inviting poet Billy Collins to be the guest speaker. I have contacted Collins' agent, Eliza Fisher, who has reserved Tuesday, April 20, for his visit to Erie. I have applied for a Gannon Schuster Art Fund grant and a Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts grant to augment his honorarium. As always, the Awards Night ceremony is free and open to the public; it will be held in the Yehl Room of Gannon's Waldron Campus Center.

Overview of Proposal and Projected Budget

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Erie County Book of Poetry:</b></li> </ul>	<b>\$3,619.00</b>
1,000 books, each book 76 pages (38 sheets double-sided) with color cover and 18 color pages throughout, perfect-bound (See attached memo from press director, Chris Matheis.)	
Promotional materials	<b>150.00</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Erie County High School Poetry Contest / Awards Night</b></li> </ul>	
Contribution towards Collins' honorarium	<b>2,000.00</b>
	<hr/>
Total Estimated Budget	<b>\$6,469.00</b>

Projected donation to Hooked on Books!:

700 books @ \$5.00 per book: \$3500.00

# Budget Worksheet

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a complete budget for your project. Add lines as necessary.

## INCOME:

**Please list each income source for this project and dollar amount requested/committed.**

(Non-cash/in-kind contributions should be cited at the bottom of the page)

<i>Source</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Poet Laureate Initiative Support _____	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 20px;"></div>
_____	_____
_____	_____
<i>Total Income</i>	\$ _____

## EXPENSES:

Please list each expense for this project and projected cost.

<i>Expense</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Materials/Supplies: _____	_____
Training/Conferences: _____	_____
Travel: _____	_____
Contracts: _____	_____
Equipment: _____	_____
Other: _____	_____
<i>Total Expenses</i>	\$ _____

*\*Total Income should be equivalent to Total Expenses*

**Notes to the Budget:** Please use this section to describe income or expenses in greater detail. List the source of any non-cash/in-kind contributions and value in this section.

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## How to Create a Project Budget

Creating your budget is an important step in project planning. The budget section of your application is important because it informs the judges of how you intend to utilize the Poet Laureate Initiative's investment and helps you ensure that your project can be completed successfully if selected.

*An accurate budget shows that:*

- You did your research and that your project costs are reasonable and well thought out;
- Your project is within the Poet Laureate Initiative's funding range and/or you plan to seek additional funding.

Use the Budget Worksheet provided to clearly and concisely state all project income and expenses. All income and expenses should relate directly to your proposed project. Use the "Notes to the Budget" section to provide additional detail, describe how you determined cost estimates and what expenses, if any, will be covered by in-kind donations or other resources.

The maximum amount of support that you can request from the Erie County Poet Laureate Initiative is \_\_\_\_\_. The Erie County Poet Laureate Initiative will not fund the following types of activities/expenses \_\_\_\_\_.

### Basic Project Expenses

Each project is unique. To assist with planning for costs related to your project, please refer to this list of generally accepted budget categories. You may request support in as many categories as appropriate for your project. Be sure to compare your budget to your project narrative when complete to ensure that you haven't forgotten anything.

Generally, budget expenses may be categorized as follows:

**Materials/Supplies** – Include project supplies and/or office supplies such as paper, envelopes, pens and pencils, CDs, and staples, etc. in this category;

**Training/Conferences** – This may include registration/participation fees for project participants to attend trainings and/or conferences;

**Travel** – Include mileage, airline tickets, taxis, car rentals, mileage reimbursements, parking fees, tolls, tips, and lodging and meals in this category;

**Contracts** – Specify contract services, consultants' fees, and/or fees for trainers that you plan to bring to Erie in this category;

**Equipment** – List all purchases for items with a life span of (usually) three years or more such as technology in this category;

**Other** – All other miscellaneous expenses may be captured in this category including but not limited to space/site rental.

The "Notes to the Budget" section should be used to provide additional detail on expenses, describe how you determined cost estimates and what expenses, if any, will be covered by in-kind donations or other resources.

\*Adapted from Grant Central Station, "Writing a Budget Narrative" [www.grant-central-station.com/articles/33/](http://www.grant-central-station.com/articles/33/) on 3/10/14.